

September 06, 2005- Help Hurricane Victims

HELP THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

On September 2, 2005, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) established a toll-free 800 number, 1-800-440-6728, to accept the generous offers to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The Department of Homeland Security has set up a Web site for similar reasons. If you have resources to donate or sell to the response agencies, please register those items in the National Emergency Resource Registry, accessible at: www.SWERN.gov. The response agencies will be checking this directory as the need for materials and services become known.

You may also donate money to several reputable organizations with years of experience in responding to disasters. This includes the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other organizations. A list of relief organizations active during disasters can be found online at www.nvoad.org. You may also call our donations hotline, and a representative can refer you to one of these organizations.

In Orange County

OperationOC is Orange County's collaborative private/public partnership to meet the needs of Hurricane Katrina's evacuees relocating to Orange County. As of today, OperationOC's Resource and Assessment Center has provided services to 474 evacuees from 205 families. 210 evacuees have returned for additional services. Orange County's totals (which include the evacuees counted above), as reported by the Orange County American Red Cross, are 472 families representing 951 evacuees of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

OperationOC has provided prevention/emergency assistance, stabilization and transition to bring hope to at least 100 displaced families. It has also established the Emergency & Transitional Assistance Fund (ETA Fund) that, once funded, will utilize the Strong Beginnings Program to provide in-person assistance and case management; transportation assistance; emergency, transitional, and permanent housing; job training; job placement; supplemental health care; mental health services; healthy, nutritious food; professional clothing; hygiene items; ongoing counseling and life coaching; financial budget assistance.

Through OperationOC residents can provide urgent need items, make donations, provide for displaced families and volunteer. For more information, please call 211, (714) 247-4328 or toll-free at (800) 956-1613 (California and Texas only) or visit www.operationoc.org

If you have an offer of goods or services, please call our hotline at 1-800-440-6728. A representative will take your name and information on how to contact you, as well as what type of goods or services you wish to donate. Donation offers may include temporary housing for disaster victims, vehicles, construction equipment, food, clothing, or other offers that may assist those displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Individuals who have access to means of communicating outside of the impacted areas in the Gulf Coast may find this compilation of Hurricane Katrina resources useful.

If Californians Hear from Trapped Victims:

The California Office of Emergency Services (OES) has learned that trapped victims on the Gulf Coast are calling family, friends, loved-ones, or anyone they can get a call out to in California asking for someone to rescue them. Contact the U.S. Coast Guard's Rescue Line at 800-323-7233 and immediate assistance will be sent.

Missing Persons

If you know of a missing person in the Gulf Coast, call the American Red Cross hotline at 1-866-GET-INFO or 1-866-438-4636.

In addition, a variety of Web sites have been established to help reunite loved ones separated by the hurricane. These Web sites have been developed independent of an official government agency: www.nola.com or www.nolarefugees.com/ or <http://batonrouge.craigslist.org/laf/>

Volunteer:

The situation on the ground makes it difficult for general volunteers to reach the disaster areas (in addition to housing volunteers). Instead, it's recommended that people rally members of their community to donate (see below).

Donate:

Monetary donations to reputable charitable organizations are emerging as the fastest, easiest and most efficient way to assist those on the Gulf Coast.

The "Early Show" aired a segment on September 1st with general information about how to make sure your donation goes to a reputable charitable organization helping victims of Hurricane Katrina, and how to avoid fake charity scams. It can be reviewed at: www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/09/01/earlyshow/main811089.shtml

The IRS has information regarding the tax deductibility of donations at:
www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=108362,00.html

- The following charities are known to be accepting donations to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina:

Adventist Community Services: (800) 381-7171

- American Red Cross: www.redcross.org Spanish site is www.cruzrojaamericana.org 1-800-HELP NOW (435-7669). Spanish is 1-800-257-7575. Because of the outpouring of assistance, the American Red Cross web site and phone lines have been jammed. Instead, individuals can mail a donation to "American Red Cross - National Disaster Relief Fund", P.O. Box 37243, Washington D.C. 20013.

- America's Second Harvest: www.secondharvest.org
 1-800-344-8070

- B'nai B'rith International: www.bnaibrith.org
 1-888-388-4224

- Catholic Charities, USA: www.catholiccharitiesusa.org
 1-800-919-9338

- Church World Service: www.churchworldservice.org
 1-800-297-1516

- Corporation for National & Community Service Disaster Relief Fund: www.nationalservice.gov
 (202) 606-6718

- Feed the Children: www.feedthechildren.org
 1-800-525-7575

- Humane Society: <http://www.hsus.org/>
 202-452-1100

- Lutheran Disaster Response: www.lwr.org
 800-638-3522

- Mennonite Disaster Service: www.mds.mennonite.net/
 717-859-2210

- Nazarene Disaster Response: <http://www.nazarenedisasterresponse.org>
 888-256-5886

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: www.pcusa.org/pda/
 800-872-3283

- Salvation Army: www.salvationarmyusa.org/USNSAHome.htm
 1-800-SAL-ARMY (725-2769)

- Southern Baptist Convention: www.sbc.net/
 1-800-462-8657, ext. 6440

- United Jewish Communities: www.ujc.org/
 1-800-462-8657, ext. 6440

- United Methodist Committee on Relief: www.methodistrelief.org
 1-877-277-2477 or (800) 554-8583

Disaster Assistance for Gulf Coast residents in affected areas:

- American Red Cross: (866) GET-INFO or (866) 438-4636
- Salvation Army: 1-800-SAL-ARMY
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

For those who sustained losses or damage in a county declared a federal disaster area may be eligible for federal and state disaster aid. Help may include: Grants for temporary housing, repairs and personal property for individuals and households, low-interest loans to homeowners, renters and business owners.

To apply for FEMA's disaster assistance programs, call FEMA's toll-free registration line at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (hearing/speech impaired). This line is open 24 hours a day, and residents are encouraged to try calling late in the evening or early in the morning to reduce call waiting time.

Online information on FEMA programs can be obtained at: www.fema.gov/about/process/ or for frequently asked disaster assistance questions: www.fema.gov/rrr/qanda.shtm.

Additional FEMA information can be found at: <http://www.fema.gov/hazards/hurricanes/> or www.fema.gov/press/2005/resources_katrina.shtm

Small Business Administration: (800) 621-3362 or www.sba.gov/disaster_recov/loaninfo/dloanassit.html

National Flood Insurance Program:(888) 379-9531or www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/fileaclaim.jsp

Shelter:

For those in affected areas who need shelter, contact the American Red Cross hotline at 1-866-GET-INFO (438-4636).